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DEPT FOR INL, JUSTICE FOR OIA, AFMLS, AND NDDS, TREASURY
FOR FINCEN, DEA FOR OILS AND OFFICE OF DIVERSION CONTROL

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This is post's response to reftel A and is the first draft for Ghana's 2004 International Narcotics Strategy Control Report (INCSR). The second part of Ghana's submission for the 2004 INCSR, reporting on money laundering and financial crimes, will follow septel per reftel B.

Summary

[1](#)1. Ghana takes steps to combat illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and has mounted major efforts against drug abuse. It has active enforcement, treatment, and rehabilitation programs; however, lack of resources remains a problem. Ghana-U.S. law enforcement coordination continued in 2004, and Ghana's law enforcement agencies took steps to deepen interagency coordination. Ghana is a party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention.

Status of Country

[1](#)2. Ghana is increasingly a transit point for illegal drugs, particularly cocaine from South America and heroin from Southeast and Southwest Asia. Europe remains the major destination, but drugs also flow to South Africa and to North America. Accra's Kotoka International Airport is increasingly a focus for traffickers. Ports at Tema and Sekondi are also used, and border posts at Aflao (Togo) and Elubo and Sampa (Cote d'Ivoire) see significant traffic. Nigerian traffickers continue to strengthen their presence in Ghana as it becomes a major transportation hub. Trafficking has also fueled increasing domestic consumption. Cannabis use is increasing in Ghana, as is local cultivation. The government has mounted significant public education programs, as well as cannabis crop substitution programs. Production of precursor chemicals is not a major problem.

Country Actions Against Drugs in 2004

Policy Initiatives

[1](#)3. The Narcotics Control Board (NCB) coordinates government efforts involving counter-narcotics activities. These activities include enforcement and control, education, prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and social re-integration. The NCB's counter-narcotics national strategy, the &National Plan of Action 1999-20038, was never implemented due to lack of funding. However, in 2004 the UN Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) financed three demand reduction projects selected from the National Plan of Action: 1) training 110 Ghana Education Service counselors (one per district in the country) on drug abuse prevention; 2) working with the Department of Social Welfare to provide vocational training to those completing drug treatment programs; and 3) producing a drug education guide for teachers throughout the country. Each year since 1999, the NCB has proposed to amend the 1990 narcotics law to allow stricter application of bail bond system (i.e., no general granting of bail when flight is a real possibility; higher sureties to assure that defendants appear for trial) and to fund NCB operations using a portion of seized proceeds, but the Attorney General's office has not acted on these proposals.

Accomplishments

[1](#)4. Comparing seizure data from the first three quarters of 2003 and 2004 (based on figures from January-September 2004) reveals that quantities of cocaine, heroin and cannabis seized have all increased. The number of persons arrested with heroin and cocaine has also increased in this period, while the number of people arrested with cannabis decreased. Overall, 2004 saw the highest number of drug trafficking arrests on record. The NCB and other law enforcement agencies

continued their successful cooperation with U.S. law enforcement agencies in 2004, sharing information as well as preparing to extradite an American citizen and a Ghanaian citizen to be tried in the United States for narcotics offenses. In January, the Narcotics Control Board and the Ghana Police Service Drug Enforcement Unit, aided by British intelligence, intercepted 588.33 kilograms of cocaine in Tema, Ghana's major port city about 20k from the capital city. The bust was West Africa's largest ever drug bust. All six suspects, five of whom were foreign nationals, were convicted in October and sentenced to significant jail time with hard labor.

15. The NCB's national drug education efforts continued in schools and churches, heightening citizens' awareness of the fight against narcotics and traffickers. On June 27, the NCB organized an event in Kumasi to highlight drug abuse in Ghana in conjunction with the UN's International Day Against Drug Abuse and Trafficking. At this launch, the UNODC announced that it would assist Ghana in establishing rehabilitation centers for drug addicts, and a pilot project in Accra has since been launched.

16. In October and November 2004, using Department of State INL funding, ICITAP trainers conducted a four-week counter-narcotics training in Ghana for thirty officers from the Ghana Narcotics Control Board, Ghana Police Service, Ghana Immigration Service, the Customs and Excise Protective Service, and the Ghana Civil Aviation Authority. The train-the-trainer program, conducted in two 2-week sessions, focused mainly on drug interdiction at air and sea ports and was declared a highly successful training, receiving widespread press coverage.

Law Enforcement Efforts

17. In 2004, Ghanaian law enforcement agencies continued to conduct joint police-NCB operations against narcotics cultivators, traffickers, and abusers. NCB agents, who are not armed, rely upon the police's Criminal Investigative Division's (CID) narcotics unit in situations requiring armed force. The drug bust in January (see above) was an example of such a joint operation. The NCB continued to work with DHL, UPS, and Federal Express to intercept packages containing narcotics.

18. The NCB reports a slight drop in the prices of cocaine, heroin and cannabis from 2003. In 2004, a gram of cocaine sells for cedis 168,350 (\$18.50 at the current exchange rate) compared to cedis 133,350 (\$15.30) in 2003. A cocaine booster sells for cedis 12,000 (\$1.32), while crack cocaine sells for cedis 5,000 (\$.55). A gram of heroin sells for cedis 145,600 (\$16) compared to 173,550 (\$20) in 2003. A heroin booster sells for cedis 10,000 (\$1.10). The price of a small parcel of cannabis in 2004 is approximately cedis 5,000 (\$.55) in 2004, while a wrapper or joint sells for cedis 1,000 (\$.11). There was a sudden increase in the prices of all narcotics after the January bust (see above), but the prices dropped again soon afterward.

Corruption

19. Despite the consistent number of arrests of suspected narcotics traffickers, Ghana has an extremely low rate of conviction, which law enforcement officials indicate is likely due to corruption within the judicial system. As an example from one region of the country, between 2001 and June 2004, of the 667 cases of drug dealers and traffickers reported in the Ashanti Region, only 244 persons had been convicted and sentenced. The backlog of cases pending trial and the limited resources facing the judiciary remain a problem in controlling drug trafficking in Ghana. The total number of arrests made between January and September 2004 was 1705. The NCB estimates that the Ashanti Region prosecution statistics are better than the national average.

10. NCB officials complain that courts often release suspected smugglers, including foreign nationals, on bail that is often set at only a tiny fraction of the value of the drugs found in a suspect's possession. The court requirement of a surety in addition to bail is often either dropped, or court registrars will fraudulently use the identical property as surety for multiple cases. In September, the NCB was called into contempt of court for withholding the passports of suspects charged with drug trafficking who had been released on bail. The NCB retained the passports while they waited for the Attorney General to file a stay of execution on the bail, which was ultimately never filed. The NCB eventually had to turn over the passports on a court order. At least one of the suspects in this case, a Dutch national, has since traveled in and out of Ghana while on bail.

11. Unlike in 2003, there were no cases of possible evidence tampering in 2004.

12. In August 2004, four police officers were arraigned and charged with taking bribes from drug traffickers in October 2001. No further action was taken on this case in 2004.

Agreements and Treaties

13. Ghana is a party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention, the 1971 UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances, and the 1961 UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, as amended by the 1972 Protocol. U.S.-Ghana extradition relations are governed by the 1931 U.S.-U.K. Extradition Treaty, to which Ghana acceded at independence. Additionally, Ghana is a party to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Protocol Agreement, which includes an extradition provision among member states. In 2003, Ghana signed a bilateral Customs Mutual Assistance Agreement with the United States.

Cultivation and Production

14. Cannabis (also known as Indian hemp) is widely cultivated in rural farmlands. The Volta, Brong-Ahafo, Western, and Ashanti regions are principal growing areas. Most is consumed locally; some is trafficked to neighboring and European countries. Cannabis is usually harvested in September and October, and law enforcement teams increase their surveillance and investigation efforts at these times. In 2004, combined NCB and police teams continued to investigate cannabis production and distribution, and to destroy cultivated cannabis farms and plants.

15. In February 2003, the NCB implemented a pilot program designed to reduce the area under cultivation, under which 140 marijuana cultivators volunteered to give up marijuana in exchange for government assistance with planting and processing new food crops and immunity from prosecution. The NCB plans to expand the program to an additional 120 farmers that have registered for assistance, although the resources were not available to do so in 2004.

Drug Flow/Transit

16. Cocaine and heroin are the main drugs that transit Ghana. Cocaine is sourced mainly from South America and destined for Europe, while heroin comes mainly from Southeast and Southwest Asia on its way to Europe and North America. Cannabis is shipped primarily to Europe, specifically to the United Kingdom. Narcotics are sometimes repackaged in Ghana for reshipment, and the most recent trend in concealment method is in carry-on, wheeled luggage.

17. While in absolute terms, drugs transiting Ghana do not yet contribute significantly to the supply of drugs to the U.S. market, Accra is an increasingly important transshipment point from Africa. There are some indications that direct shipments into the United States is on the rise. In November, two alleged leaders of a drug smuggling ring from Ghana were indicted in Columbus, Ohio for shipping heroin for distribution across central Ohio, indicating a direct flow of illicit narcotics from Ghana into the Midwest U.S. Direct flights from Accra play an important role in the transshipment of heroin to the U.S. by West African trafficking organizations. Because of safety problems, the U.S. FAA imposed a ban in July 2004 on flights into the U.S. by Ghana's flagship carrier, the only provider of direct flights from Ghana to the U.S. However, according to the NCB, this did not reduce the drug trafficking from Ghana to the U.S., but re-routed the flow through Europe. The NCB reports that narcotics air transit through Ghana has reduced somewhat in favor of land routes to Abidjan, largely due to the instability in Cote d'Ivoire, which creates more favorable conditions there for narcotics traffickers. The biggest challenge in Ghana, however, are the seaports, as most of the coastal border is unmonitored and entry points are more porous. According to the NCB, the seaports allow greater quantities of narcotics to come through at places where there are weak patrol systems in place.

Domestic Programs

18. The NCB works with schools, professional training institutions, churches, local governments, and the general public to reduce local consumption. The Ministries of Health and Education further coordinate their efforts through their representatives on the Board. Board Members and staff frequently host public lectures, participate in radio discussion programs, and encourage newspaper articles on the dangers of drug abuse and trafficking. Ghana's National Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking was celebrated on June 27, in Kumasi, Ashanti Region. Although treatment programs have lagged behind preventative education and enforcement due to lack of funding, there are three

government psychiatric hospitals receiving drug patients, and three private facilities in Accra, run by local NGOs, also assisting drug abusers.

U.S. Policy Initiatives and Programs

U.S. Goals and Objectives

19. The USG's counter-narcotics and anticrime goals in Ghana are to strengthen Ghanaian law enforcement capacity generally, to improve interdiction capacities, to enhance the NCB's office and field operation functions, and to reduce Ghana's role as a transit point for narcotics.

Bilateral Cooperation

20. In 2002, the United States provided the Government of Ghana with \$84,000 worth of counter-narcotics assistance in the form of surveillance and detection equipment, including two narcotics detection devices (itemizers⁸) installed at Kotoka International Airport in December 2003. Similar equipment funded in FY2000 and FY2001 is effectively maintained and has facilitated a number of drug arrests and seizures. FY2002 funding provided training for the Police and CEPS to create Internal Affairs Units, which will assist in suppressing corruption and strengthening their capacity to interdict illegal drugs. FY2002 money also funded a four-week, interagency counter-narcotics training focusing on drug interdiction at Ghana's air and sea ports, which took place in November 2004.

The Road Ahead

21. Improved narcotics interdiction, investigative capabilities, and prosecutorial successes sum up the USG's major policy goals. A focus on improved oversight of financial transactions is a particular concern, given the potential for any narcotics financial networks to be used by terrorist organizations.

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